



Employee News

Governor M. Jodi Rell

Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara

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Should We Change Our Name?

Over the past several months, the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) has been collecting data on possibly renaming the department. On September 7th in Hartford, the **DMR Name Change Forum** will give consumers, families, advocates and other interested parties the opportunity to provide feedback on this important issue.

Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara was recently interviewed about the name change issue on the **Brad Davis Radio Show** and will be speaking on the **Mornings with Ray and Diane Show**, WTIC-Radio on September 6th at 7:50 a.m.

During the 2006 legislative session, the DMR submitted legislation regarding the potential name change. **Public Act 06-92 (HB 5478), An Act Concerning the Department of Mental Retardation** passed the Connecticut State Legislature and requires DMR to solicit input regarding the name. Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara will submit a report of findings and recommendations, including the cost of any recommended name change, to the Governor, the Office of Policy and Management and the Public Health Committee in January 2007.

There has been increasing interest from advocates, families and consumers nationally and specifically in Connecticut, in response to the term "mental retardation"

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"Ask the Commissioner"

If you have a question for Commissioner O'Meara, you are invited to e-mail

Joan Barnish at

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Pro Sports Challenge XV

For the first time in fifteen years drenching rain moved Pro Sports Challenge indoors. The beautiful new Darien High School opened its three gyms to participants and the competition began. The pirate uniforms of Pirate Capital in Norwalk and the baseball uniforms of Deloitte set the tone of the competition. The enthusiasm of Mastercard International teams ruled the day. Commissioner Peter O'Meara of the Department of Mental Retardation thanked participants and volunteers for helping people with developmental disabilities.

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Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara poses with staff, sponsors and members of the Parents & Friends of Lower Fairfield Center.

SEND US YOUR STORIES

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Celebrating Diversity

Voices of inspiration rang out during the “Gospel Music Event” held recently at the East Hartford Cultural Center. The event, which was sponsored by Black History 365 and the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) North Region Cultural Competency Initiative, was the first in a series focusing on “Black Music.” The program, which was MC’d by Andre McDade, included “Praise and Worship” songs performed by Talisha Graves, “Spoken Words” by Salenda Hayes and uplifting gospel songs performed by “The Sister of Faith.” DMR staff member, Reginald Robinson performed an inspiration solo, while Sean Chavis presented a background of “History and Origin of Gospel Music.”



Deputy Commissioner, Kathryn duPree enjoys the music



The Sister's of Faith perform an uplifting gospel song for the audience

Deputy Commissioner Kathryn duPree and Regional Director John Houchin

attended the afternoon event and provided the welcome and opening remarks respectively. Deputy Commissioner duPree gave an overview of the importance of Cultural Competency in the department stating “We serve a diverse population and have a diverse workforce, we can only benefit from knowing each others history.”

Following the program, the 75 attendees including staff, consumers, friends and family members, enjoyed a traditional “soul food” luncheon including fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, cornbread, string beans and a cool glass of lemonade.

Name Change *continued from page one*

because it is sometimes thought to be stigmatizing and offensive to people. Many professional organizations and states that still use this term have been asked to consider changing their name to something that is perceived more positively. However, a name change is not meant to change the current mission of the department including eligibility criteria of people served.

Pro Sports Challenge XV, *continued from page one*

The Harlem Magic Masters entertained kids and adults. Mark Gastineau, a former New York Jet who played ten seasons in the National Football League, was the celebrity of the day. Mark is considered as one of the quickest and most feared pass-rusher of his generation. In the awards ceremony following the event, Chairman Steve Levine thanked 15 year participant Gen Re and all companies who helped raise \$120,000 this year. One million, two hundred thousand has been raised by Pro Sports Challenge to benefit residents residing at Lower Fairfield Center and Martin House of Norwalk. The winning trophy was presented to Clean Air Partners. Another highlight of the day was Broadway Star, Emily Hall, singing the National Anthem.